

A study of the “barbarian submitters  
(蠻夷降者 *man-yi xiang-zhe*)” and the  
“*gui-yi* barbarians (歸義蠻夷 *gui-yi man-yi*)”  
in the Former Han Dynasty

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The Former Han Dynasty had distinguished the “barbarians (蠻夷 *man-yi*/non-Chinese peoples)” between the “submitters (降者 *xiang-zhe*)” and the “*gui-yi* (歸義)”, the *dian-shu-guo* (典屬國/the Manager of the dependent states) had controlled the “barbarian submitters (蠻夷降者)”, the *dian-ke* (典客/subsequent *da-hong-lu* 大鴻臚/the Chamberlain for Dependencies) had controlled the various “*gui-yi* barbarians (歸義蠻夷)”. So far, the meaning of the distinction has been vague, but really, they had the distinct and different meaning each other. The Former Han Dynasty had controlled the “barbarians” on the basis of the distinction.

The barbarian’s “submitting (降 *xiang*)” to the Han Dynasty had included the “*nei-shu* (內屬)”. The treatment for the “barbarian submitters” had been various, according to the cases of the “submitting”; the cases of ordinary “submitting”, “*nei-shu*”, and the cases of controlling “submitters” by the *shu-guo* (屬國/dependent states) system. But, all of the “barbarian submitters” had been treated as the “internal vassal (內臣 *nei-chen*)” of the Han Dynasty.

The “*gui-yi*” has two means; one is the all action to depend on the Han dynasty, including “submitting”, and the other is the action for being given the guestship in the Han Dynasty, or the guestship itself. The “*gui-yi* barbarians” as the guestship occupies the position between the “internal vassal” and the “external vassal (外臣 *wai-chen*)”. The “*gui-yi* barbarians” could become not only the “internal vassal” by “submitting”,

as the all other “barbarians”, but also the officer of the Han Dysasty. Besides they could be conferred the Han nobility (列侯 *lie-hou*) by winning distinguished services, and become the “internal vassal”.